

Red Clover Book Award



2021 - 2022

EDUCATOR'S RESOURCE GUIDE



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About This Guide

Welcome to the 2021-2022 Red Clover Book Award Program! The Red Clover Book Award is a statewide children's choice picture book award under the auspices of the Vermont Department of Libraries. The award is named after Vermont's state flower and is given annually to one of ten committee-nominated picture books that receives the most votes from Vermont children in grades K-4.

This guide is meant to be a road map as you navigate the Red Clover Book Award Program in your library or classroom. It was compiled by the 2021-2022 Red Clover Book Award committee members. You can find this guide, as well as other resources we weren't able to include here, on the Vermont Department of Libraries website: <https://bit.ly/2u0RZ3p>

2021-2022 Red Clover Book Award Committee:

- Abby Adams, *Shoreham Elementary School & Platt Memorial Library (Shoreham)*
- Kelly Bouteiller, *Charlotte Central School*
- Cara Clopton, *Allen Brook School (Williston)*
- Hannah Fjeld, *Neshobe School (Brandon)*
- Diane Grenkow, *Jeudevine Memorial Library (Hardwick)*
- Abby Johnson, *Cobleigh Public Library (Lyndonville)*
- Liv Perry, *Morristown Elementary School*
- Lis Zwick, *Echo Valley Community School District (Orange & Washington)*

Advisors to the Committee:

- Jonathan Clark, *Vermont Department of Libraries (Barre)*
- Jennifer Johnson, *Vermont Department of Libraries (Barre)*
- Wendy Martin, *Vermont Humanities Council (Montpelier)*

History of the Red Clover Book Award

The Red Clover Book Award Program was created in 1995 by Windham County Reads, a non-profit literacy organization dedicated to bringing families and books together. Conceived by Eileen Christelow and named by Jessie Haas, this children's choice award was designed to help young children experience the unique genius of the picture book and develop a lasting appreciation for excellence in writing and illustration.

Program guidelines and materials were originally developed by Ruth Allard of Windham County Reads and Eileen Christelow, with encouragement from Grace Greene of the Vermont Department of Libraries and the help of many Windham County librarians, teachers and children's book authors and illustrators. The program was launched from the Windham County Reads Reading Room at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, accompanied by an exhibit which introduced children and adults to visual thinking strategies and provided educators with a model for discussing books with children.

The Eyes of Gray Wolf, written by Jonathan London and illustrated by Jon Van Zyle, was the award winner during an enthusiastically received initial year in Windham County, and the program quickly went statewide. Under the leadership of Mother Goose Programs™/Vermont Center for the Book for over twenty years, the Red Clover Book Award Program became a keystone in elementary literacy programming in schools and libraries. The award is currently under the auspices of the Vermont Department of Libraries, and the department is committed to upholding the award's reputation as a brilliant celebration of picture books and the wisdom of children to select the very best.

Mission

The Red Clover Book Award Program is a children's choice picture book award designed to foster awareness, understanding and appreciation of the picture book. The award encourages readers to enjoy, explore and discuss the pictorial, narrative and design elements of the picture book in order to: sharpen critical thinking and communication skills; heighten appreciation of literature and the visual arts; and nurture enthusiasm for reading and promote lifelong learning.

The Red Clover Book Award Committee

The Red Clover Book Award Committee is comprised of Vermont literacy experts such as public librarians, school librarians, teachers, and authors, and ranges from eight to ten members. The committee is managed by the youth services consultant at the Vermont Department of Libraries, with additional consulting from the Vermont Center for the Book.

Occasionally, there will be an opening on the committee for new members. Those interested in joining will submit a cover letter, resume, and two book reviews (one positive and one negative) of picture books published within the last few years. The committee and youth services consultant will review applications and score them according to the committee rubric and select members that are the best fit.

Responsibilities of Red Clover Committee members:

- Three years' service, with one three-year renewal (term begins in August)
- Ongoing reading of the year's new picture books
- Selection of the year's nominees
- Developing activities for nominated books
- Writing, reviewing, and presenting activities at meetings and conferences

Selection of the Red Clover Book Award Nominees

Basic eligibility requirements:

1. The book must have been published in the prior year.
2. The award is for an entire book—text and illustrations.
3. Both the author and illustrator must be living at the time of the selection.
4. Only one title by the same combination of author and illustrator may be chosen in a given year.
5. The books must be appropriate, in the aggregate, for a range of children in grades K-4.
6. Both fiction and non-fiction books are eligible.

How to Participate in the Red Clover Book Award Program

Schools with students in Kindergarten through fourth grade, public libraries, and students who are homeschooled may all participate in the Red Clover Book Award Program. There is no need to register. The public or school librarian, or a designated teacher, may conduct the program for an entire community or school; or, a teacher may do the program for his or her classroom only if the rest of the school is not participating.

Materials

We strongly encourage schools and libraries to purchase the ten nominated titles, which were all published in 2020.

Voting

Children in Kindergarten through fourth grade are eligible to vote if they have read or heard read aloud at least five of the books from the list of nominees. Children may not vote for books they have not read or heard. Participating teachers, librarians and homeschooling parents will encourage children to keep track of the books read or heard and then vote for their favorite using the simple student ballot sheet we provide*. Children may vote for one book only. You may want to hold a voting party—have a snack, then vote and discuss what was voted for and why.

Adults will submit votes for all their students using the webform on the Vermont Department of Libraries website. This form will be available in the spring of 2022.

**This sheet is available on the Vermont Department of Libraries website.*

Promoting the Program in Schools

New books, new year

- Include a half hour about the Red Clover Book Award during in-service before school begins.
- There are always new staff members who might not be familiar with the program. It is a good idea to start fresh every year.
- Give a mini-workshop for teachers and model book discussions with teachers and children.
- Make sure that your Open House features a Red Clover display.

Across the curriculum

- The Red Clover Book Award program can help students achieve standards across the curriculum. Work with teachers and use the guide and books to make connections.
- Use specific Red Clover books to kick off classroom themes.
- Display author/illustrator pictures and biographical information. Use Red Clover books as launching points into library and classroom collections.
- Make sure you provide time for students to read Red Clover books from past years as well. Provide plenty of time for discussion of ideas and issues.
- Encourage all staff (include cafeteria staff, bus drivers) to choose favorite books, read aloud to students, and plan book-related events together.

Throughout the school year

- Ask older students to share their favorite Red Clover books (past or present) with younger students. Do reading buddies.
- Create a traveling book bag that goes home with children.
- Have older children prepare book talks for younger children about their favorites.
- Include a Red Clover program description and book list (student designed?) with student report cards.
- Prepare a handout for parents and highlight books and activities in school newsletters.
- Create bookbags for homeschoolers with companion titles.
- Create bulletin board displays with children's art and writing about the books.

In the community

- Invite local bookstores to host a special Red Clover event.
- Have Red Clover luncheons with small groups of students and special guests from the community to discuss the books.
- Publicize program anecdotes and success stories as widely as possible.

Voting

- Prepare, with children, a program for the school board on the eve of voting.
- Have a Red Clover Book Award sleep-over at voting time to develop more enthusiasm.
- Celebrate voting with a school-wide Red Clover Day.

The Public Library and the Red Clover Award

The Red Clover Award program is not done exclusively in schools. Each year more and more libraries participate to support homeschoolers or supplement afterschool programming. Here are some ideas:

- Purchase a complete set of the ten Red Clover nominees every year and download the Educator's Resource Guide.
- Booktalk the nominees to groups, both at the public library and in the schools. A good time to do this is when you go to the schools in the spring to talk up the summer reading program. Also, many homeschooled students get involved in the program through their local public libraries.
- Spread the word about the Red Clover Book Award. Put articles in the local newspaper, and in your library's newsletter*. Put the books in a special display, and do not forget to get silver medal stickers for the winning book each year from the Vermont Department of Libraries!
- Get yourself invited to a faculty meeting at your local school. Let the teachers, librarians and administration know how you can help with the Red Clover program.
- Work with the school librarian and teachers to coordinate your efforts. One possibility is for the public librarians to concentrate on one book and invite classes to the library for a program of activities around that title.
- Hold a series of 10 or more weekly meetings for children in grades K-4 to cover all the titles. This could be done specifically for homeschoolers in the morning or open it up to everyone by having it after school or on the weekend.
- The voting takes place in the spring. Be sure to get children together to vote, and then submit their votes for them on the online webform before the deadline. Every vote counts!

**There is a sample press release and newsletter article in the appendix of this guide.*

Integrating Technology into Your Program

The integration of technology into your Red Clover program can promote active engagement with the books, participation in groups, frequent interaction and feedback, and connection to real-world experts. Here are some general ideas for use of technology with the 2021-2022 Red Clover books. Make sure to check with your Technology department before using a specific tool to ensure it meets your district's privacy guidelines. To find specific ideas for each of the books check out their individual curriculum connections pages in this guide.

Active engagement using a tablet or computer:

- Create artwork or slide shows using Chrome Canvas (or other drawing apps) to draw pictures of a story sequence, then save the pictures to a photo album, and use the album to create a slideshow.
- Create book reviews using ChatterPix Kids (iPad/Android) where students use a photo they have taken or a picture they have drawn, put a mouth on the picture, and then have the photo or picture “talk” to review the book. You could also use Flipgrid to collect students’ video responses to each book. Other apps/websites that could be used for book reviews are: WeVideo, Educreations (iPad or PC), Show Me, and Biblionasium.
- Create ebooks using Book Creator or Creative Book Builder, or create an animated story with Toontastic. You can also make simple ebooks in Google Slides by saving it as a PDF. If you want it to be printable, set the page size to 8.5 x 11 or 11 x 8.5 so it will print easily!
- Create story webs or information webs using Padlet, Canva, Popplet (iPad or PC) or Kidspiration. Kidspiration offers many graphic organizers and is easy to adapt to different books or needs. (It’s not free, however.)
- Actively review the Red Clover books by using or creating a Jeopardy game at www.superteachertools.com. Kahoot.com or Quizziz.com games are usually created and then publicized on the VSLA listserv so you can copy a game and then tweak it to make your own version.

Connections to real-world experts:

All websites should be previewed before they are shared with children. Author/illustrator websites are noted within each book section on the following pages. Many authors will video chat with classrooms for a minimal charge. In addition, Kate Messner has compiled a list of authors who Skype for free at <http://www.katemessner.com/authors-who-skype-with-classes-book-clubs-for-free/>. Some of the information may not be current due to the original post’s date.

Connect to other Vermont students and educators:

Reach out on the VSLA listserv to find another Vermont school to share with about the Red Clover books. Consider sending photos, drawings, or emails back and forth, posting on a shared Padlet, or video chatting about the books in a Google Meet or Zoom. You could also collaborate on a Flipgrid or share projects that you create such as commercials for the Red Clover books.

2020-2021 RED CLOVER BOOK AWARD NOMINEES

VERMONT'S PICTURE BOOK AWARD

FOR CHILDREN IN GRADES K-4

Blackall, Sophie. *If You Come to Earth*. Chronicle, 2020.

Bryant, Jen. *Above the Rim: How Elgin Baylor Changed Basketball*. Illustrated by Frank Morrison. Abrams, 2020.

Fan, Terry, Eric, & Devin. *The Barnabus Project*. Tundra, 2020.

Fleming, Candace. *Honeybee: The Busy Life of Apis Mellifera*. Illustrated by Eric Rohmann. Neal Porter, 2020.

Pimentel, Annette Bay. *All the Way to the Top: How One Girl's Fight for Americans with Disabilities Changed Everything*. Illustrated by Nabi H. Ali. Sourcebooks Explore, 2020.

Pinkney, Jerry. *The Little Mermaid*. Little, Brown, 2020.

Rex, Michael. *Facts vs. Opinions vs. Robots*. Nancy Paulsen, 2020.

Shiraishi, Ashima. *How to Solve a Problem: The Rise (and Falls) of a Rock-Climbing Champion*. Illustrated by Yao Xiao. Make Me a World, 2020.

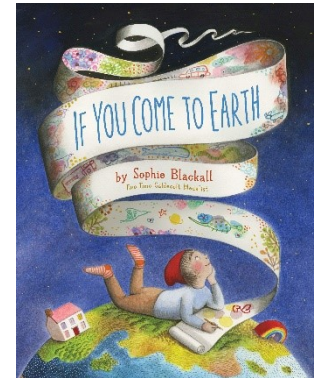
Walker, Tricia Elam. *Nana Akua Goes to School*. Illustrated by April Harrison. Schwartz & Wade, 2020.

Yolen, Jane, & Heidi E.Y. Stemple. *I Am the Storm*. Illustrated by Kristen & Kevin Howdeshell. Rise x Penguin Workshop, 2020.

If You Come to Earth

Sophie Blackall

Chronicle, 2020.



“Dear visitor from Outer Space,” begins this book, written as a letter containing just about everything you could imagine on Earth. Starting with an approach to our planet (“the greeny-blue one”) from space, and gradually arriving on the surface, the letter explains the land, housing, people, emotions, weather, transportation, food, animals, music, color, and all the details and diversity within by using simple text and beautifully detailed watercolor illustrations. A dazzling array of people of different abilities, races, professions, and pastimes are shown communicating, interacting, and celebrating our home.

Big Ideas and Enduring Understanding:

- The Earth is beautiful in its diversity.
- It is important to be kind and helpful to new people visiting your community.
- We are all responsible to care for the Earth and all its inhabitants.

Overarching Questions:

- Why is it important to understand and appreciate the incredible diversity of the Earth?
- What important information about our Earth would we need to communicate to visitors from outer space?

Sample Text-Dependent Questions:

- There is a character throughout most of the book that narrates the story. What does the character look like? What is the child’s name and how do you know? (child with red hat, Quinn, illustrations and also the author’s note.)
- Sophie Blackall illustrates real people throughout this book, including children of a class she worked with. There is a page with this text: “Grown-ups do lots of things to make the world work.” Do you recognize any of those people? Some of them are famous for the work they do.
- One page says: “It’s better when we help each other.” What are all the ways you see people helping each other?

Curriculum Connections:

English/Language Arts:

- Have students pick one small item to describe to someone not from Earth and write a paragraph about what it looks like, how it’s used, if it makes sound, etc. Then, have them read it to the class so they can try to guess what the item is, or have them draw a picture using the details in the paragraph.

- Sophie Blackall wrote: “Older people are good at telling stories about the world when they were young.” Have students ask someone older to tell them a story about when they were young, or to describe a piece of technology they once used that is now obsolete.
- Have students pretend they are the visitor from space. Students can write a letter back to Quinn answering the questions at the end of the letter, and they can include a picture of they wish. The illustrations on the book cover (underneath the dust jacket) can be inspiring for this activity.

Art:

- Early in the book, the illustrations are done in ‘a bird’s eye view’. How is that perspective useful for those parts? Try illustrating your school or home from a bird’s eye view.
- At the beginning and the end of the book, we see Quinn drawing on a very long piece of paper. Have each student in the class draw something inspired by this story, and then tape them all together into one long drawing.
- On the page that says, “I’m a kid and kids go to school to learn stuff...,” we see a class all drawing their ideas of what visitors from outer space might look like (you can also see this under the jacket!). Have students draw their ideas about what a visitor from outer space might look like. What features would it have, and why?
- On the page that says, “These are the colors you need to paint everything in the world.” Look at some of the color names that Blackall created. Teach a little bit about color theory, and then use paints or pastels to have students blend their own color and give it its own special name.

Social-Emotional Learning:

- Sophie Blackall made this book because she wanted, “a book that would bring us together.” This book shows us that people have both many things in common as well as many differences. Play “Step in the Circle / Crossing the Line” with students so they can see how they are alike, and different from, their classmates. Have students get in a circle or stand in two lines facing one another, and then have them step forward if a statement is true for them. It is important to be silent during this game, and to use our powers of observation to look for things we have in common or differences with others. Use this guide, or one of many others available online, to get ideas for statements: <https://www.littlefloweryoga.com/blog/crossing-the-line-a-connecting-activity/>

Social Studies:

- Students can try making their name using sign language or Braille using the illustrations in the book.
- At the end of her author’s note, Blackall says, “Right this minute, we are all here together on this beautiful planet. It’s the only one we have, so we should take care of it. And each other.” Celebrate Earth Day with your students (Friday, April 22, 2022) using some of the suggested activities on this website: <https://www.plt.org/educator-tips/earth-day-activities/>

Author/Illustrator Information:

- Sophie Blackall's website: <https://www.sophieblackall.com/> Blackall was born in Australia in 1970. She moved to New York in 2002, and she currently lives in Brooklyn, New York.
- For more activity ideas, check out this six page publisher activity guide: <http://dispatch.barnesandnoble.com/content/dam/ccr/h/bn-storytime/2020/9-26-If-You-Come-to-Earth.pdf>
- Share this video of Sophie Blackall reading *If You Come to Earth* (10 min 15 sec) <https://youtu.be/103XkDQuPCU>

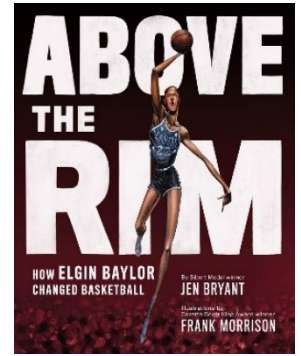
Companion Books:

- Jeffers, Oliver. *Here We Are: Notes for Living on Planet Earth*. Philomel, 2017.
- Sayre, April Pulley. *Thank You, Earth: A Love Letter to Our Planet*. Greenwillow, 2018.
- Wenzel, Brendan. *Hello Hello*. Chronicle, 2018.

Above the Rim: How Elgin Baylor Changed Basketball

Jen Bryant (author), Frank Morrison (illustrator)

Abrams, 2020.



On March 22, 2021, the world lost an influential and inspiring basketball legend. Although many have heard of Jackie Robinson, the name Elgin Baylor is not as commonly known. Chosen first in the 1958 NBA draft, he was one of the first professional Black basketball players. Baylor faced segregation as he was turned away from hotels and restaurants. He protested at one game and caught the nation's attention, altering the history of sports. With active and descriptive text, author Jen Bryant weaves together a story of the majesty and beauty of Baylor's athleticism with events from his professional career, interspersing and relating them to civil rights protests occurring at the same time. Illustrator Frank Morrison captures Baylor's fluidity of motion and creates bright, glowing portraits of other civil rights heroes. This biography of a brave and talented athlete is a vibrant and uplifting tribute to a legend we so recently lost.

Big Ideas and Enduring Understanding:

- NBA legend Elgin Baylor changed how basketball was played on and off the court.
- There is power in protest.
- Elgin Baylor's life and career were shaped by the discrimination he faced and by the civil rights movement.

Overarching Questions:

- What makes some athletes become powerful activists?
- Why do you think Elgin Baylor is not as famous as some other NBA stars?
- How did Elgin Baylor change how basketball was played on and off court?

Sample Text-Dependent Questions:

- What is meant by the quote "sometimes you have to sit down to stand up?"
- Elgin Baylor had a unique way of gliding and leaping across the court. What were some of the action words used to describe how he moved?
- What events from the civil rights movement mentioned in the book were you already familiar with? Which ones are you eager to learn more about?

Curriculum Connections:

History/Social Studies:

- Make a timeline that shows significant events from Baylor's career, as well as the civil rights events mentioned in the book (Montgomery Bus Boycott, integration of Little Rock Nine, etc.). Jamboard is recommended for creating digital timelines.
- Discuss how the First Amendment relates to Baylor sitting out a game, and how other athletes have protested. Discuss and research other athletes who have shown courage through activism

(Colin Kaepernick, Althea Gibson, Kareem Abdul-Jabba, Mohammed Ali) or went on strike (Milwaukee Bucks). Educators can find more information from this site:

https://www.yardbarker.com/general_sports/articles/a_history_of_athletes_and_activism/s1_32219363#slide_1.

- Read about Baylor's statue at the Staples Center: <https://theundefeated.com/features/elgin-baylor-holds-back-tears-during-statue-ceremony/> Discuss other monuments and statues erected in honor of the civil rights events discussed in the book, like the Rosa Parks statue in Montgomery (<https://www.al.com/news/2019/12/montgomery-unveils-rosa-parks-statue.html>) and the Little Rock Nine memorial at the Arkansas capitol (<https://civilrightstrail.com/attraction/little-rock-nine-memorial-at-state-capitol/>).

English/Language Arts:

- Brainstorm a list of the different action words and phrases to describe how Baylor leaps and moves across the court. Then students can brainstorm their own list of words to describe how their favorite athlete moves or how they move when playing sports.
- Explore other picture book biographies - either through an author study of Jen Bryant (including former Red Clover nominee *A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin*) or picture book biographies of athletes such as *Wilma Unlimited* by Kathleen Krull.
- Read about basketball's players and teams; have students choose a player or team and write an acrostic poem about basketball using the player or team's name.

Physical Education/Gym:

- Watch video clips of Baylor playing here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8DOlbbOcwk>. More footage can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjNS_oYE92E. Then discuss some of the moves and plays he used on court and how they were related to what was described in the book - and maybe even try some of them out in the school gym!

Art:

- Design a pair of basketball shoes. Consider colors, logo, lacings, aerodynamic features.
- Frank Morrison's art has a distinctive style in this book, with warm colors and elongated limbs for pictures that capture the action and movement of Elgin Baylor. Draw a portrait in the style of Frank Morrison.

Author/Illustrator Information:

- Author website: <https://www.jenbryant.com>. Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/jenbryant13/>.
 - For further resources on the book: https://www.jenbryant.com/books/inprint/bk_above_the_rim.html.

- Illustrator website: <https://morrisongraphics.com>. Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/frankmorrison/?hl=en>.
- For other activities and resources, see the Classroom Bookshelf article [“Above the Rim: Peaceful Activism for a New Year”](#) by Denise Davila.

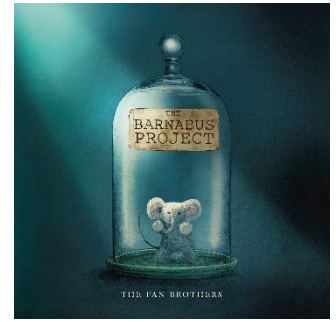
Companion Books:

- Barber, Barbara E. *Allie's Basketball Dream*. Illustrated by Darryl Ligan. Lee & Low Books, 1996.
- Coy, John. *Hoop Genius: How a Desperate Teacher and a Rowdy Gym Class Invented Basketball*. Illustrated by Joe Morse. Carolrhoda Books, 2013.
- Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down*. Illustrated by Brian Pinkney. Little, Brown, 2010.
- Slade, Suzanne. *Swish!: The Slam-Dunking, Alley-Ooping, High-Flying Harlem Globetrotters*. Illustrated by Don Tate. Little, Brown, 2020.

The Barnabus Project

The Fan Bros.

Tundra, 2020.



What if you believed that anything was possible, and you found others just like you? Say you were all misfits in one way or another, but you had each other and dreamed of freedom? This is the premise of *The Barnabus Project* led by a half-mouse, half-elephant named Barnabus and their adventure in dreaming big and escaping the underworld of Perfect Pets. The illustrations are detailed, sometimes strange, and all delightful. A quirky story about misfits, friendship, and freedom with a cast of unusual "Failed Projects" that are not failures in the end.

Big Ideas and Enduring Understanding:

- Imperfections make us special, not worthless.
- Working together can make some things that seem impossible, possible.
- Freedom is worth fighting for.

Overarching Questions:

- What are the problems with labelling anything as “perfect?”
- How do our differences make us collectively stronger?

Sample Text-Dependent Questions:

- What did Barnabus dream of when he was trapped in his jar?
- Why did the Green Suits decide Barnabus was a Failed Project?
- When was a time when the Failed Projects worked together?
- Why do the Failed Projects stop during their escape to release the large, green, one-eyed creature?

Curriculum Connections:

English/Language Arts:

- The story ends with the Failed Projects living free in the real world. Write what happens next. All we know is the final line of the book “It wasn’t always easy...but they always stuck together.”
- Have students think about what would go into their perfect ice cream sundae and write a poem about it, and then share with the class poem with the class. Was their perfect sundae like everyone else’s?

Art:

- Have students design their own Perfect Pet. What makes it perfect? You can use these planning sheets from Tundra Books: https://tundrabooks.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/The-Barnabus-Project_activity-sheets.pdf
- Use clay or another 3D medium to create a Failed Project.
- When the Failed Projects escaped from the secret lab, they crawled through the maze of pipes. Design a maze of your own and see if your friends can solve it.

STEM:

- All animals have adaptations that allow them to survive. Identify one or more adaptations of a Failed Project that might help it survive in the wild.
- With older students, as a class, do some research about genetic engineering. Make a list of pros and cons. Discuss how this information relates to the experience of Barnabus and the other Failed Projects.
- Make Lite-Up Lois or another glowing pet using conductive dough and LED bulbs: <https://squishycircuits.com/pages/dough-recipes>, or get e-textiles supplies and sew your own light-up Perfect Pet: <https://learn.sparkfun.com/tutorials/lilytiny-plush-monster/all>

Social Emotional Learning:

- The Failed Projects work together and discover their own strengths as they escape the lab. As a class, identify some examples of strengths that the characters show during the escape. Why is working together so important? What strengths do you bring to teamwork?
- Take the teamwork discussion into practice by engaging in a team building activity such as “Cross the River” <https://www.eteambuilding.org/team-building-games/river-crossing/> Talk specifically about the roles that are necessary to be successful and strengths that different members can bring to the team (even patience is a strength!).

Author/Illustrator Information:

- Find out more about the Fan Brothers and their other books on their website: <http://www.thefanbrothers.com/>
- The Fan Brothers read *The Barnabus Project* aloud: <https://youtu.be/ipk377rsxzc>
- A great interview about the process the Fan Brothers used to create the book: <http://www.letstalkpicturebooks.com/2020/11/lets-talk-illustrators-162-the-fan-brothers.html>

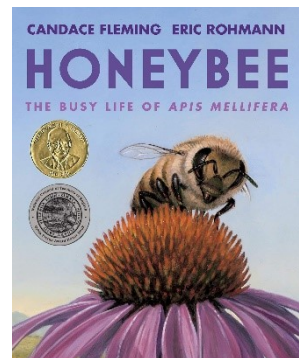
Companion Books:

- Bennett, Kelly. *Not Norman: A Goldfish Story*. Candlewick, 2005.
- Saltzberg, Barney. *Beautiful Oops!* Workman, 2010.
- Zuill, Andrea. *Sweetie*. Schwartz & Wade, 2019.

Honeybee: The Busy Life of *Apis Mellifera*

Candace Fleming (author), Eric Rohmann (illustrator)

Neal Porter, 2020.



Just how close can you get to a honeybee without using a microscope - or getting stung? As close as your nose will let you when your head is in this nonfiction book! Captured in glorious oil paintings, *Honeybee* showcases the life of a female bee who rarely rests in 35 days. The back matter included is especially rich with a detailed *Apis* exploded view and facts about declining bee populations.

Big Ideas and Enduring Understanding:

- A worker bee does many different jobs over the course of its brief life.
- Honeybees' lives are important and valuable.
- Communities work when every member contributes in their own way.

Overarching Questions:

- Why are honeybees important?
- How does *Apis* contribute to the survival of her hive?
- What kinds of jobs do people do to contribute to a community?

Sample Text-Dependent Questions:

- When *Apis*'s job is nursing, what does the illustration show? How does the picture show a lifecycle?
- What is different between the queen and the other bees?
- Why do you think Candace Fleming chose to end the book the same way it begins?

Curriculum Connections:

STEM:

- Create labeled illustrations of the life cycle of a worker bee. Consider adding detail by including the various jobs that *Apis* does throughout her life, and how those jobs affect the worker bee's life cycle. For more detail about the part of a bee's life prior to hatching, watch this [National Geographic time-lapse video of bee eggs developing into bees](#).
- One of the most important functions honeybees perform in the environment is pollination. Read the section Helping Out Honeybees in the book's back matter and take on one of the suggested tasks---create pollinator habitats, give bees a voice by writing to your congresspeople, or learn and buy from local beekeepers.
- Use some of the numbers in the book - how far *Apis* flew during her ten days of flying, how many times per second her wings beat, etc. - and have students create word problems to solve with their classmates.

English/Language Arts:

- This book provides step-by-step descriptions of each stage of Apis's life. Have students write a similar description of their own life so far. What details are important to include?
- The story of Apis's life sometimes feels like a poem, especially because of the ways that Fleming uses repetitive and strongly visual language. Have students write their own poems inspired by the book.

Social-Emotional Learning:

- Honeybees in a hive rely on one another to complete their jobs and to make the hive successful. To do this, they need to communicate and cooperate with each other. Play a group game to practice cooperation and communication, such as: <https://www.centervention.com/cooperative-play-activity-for-kids/>

Art:

- Eric Rohmann's oil paintings take a very small insect and make it big, showing many little details of the honeybee and its environment. Have students choose something very small and create a BIG picture of it using a medium of their choice. How much detail can they observe on their object and include in their image?
- Have students use a smartphone or camera to take closeup photos of an insect in their neighborhood. They can display their work in a digital collage.

Physical Education/Gym:

- Honeybees dance to communicate with each other about the location of good food sources. Can you make up a dance that communicates something? What sort of moves could you use to communicate? Maybe make a dance move for each letter of the alphabet, and then dance your name. Or you could make dance moves for left, right, forward, and back, and use dance to give someone directions.
- Play Bees in the Hive (see instructions and necessary supplies here: <https://hopperpe.wordpress.com/bees-in-the-hive/>)

Author/Illustrator Information:

- Candace Fleming's website: <https://www.candacefleming.com/>
- Eric Rohmann's website: <https://www.ericrohmann.com/>

Companion Books:

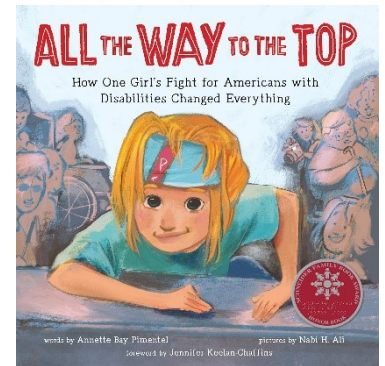
- Burns, Loree Griffin. *The Hive Detectives: Chronicle of a Honey Bee Catastrophe*. Illustrated by Ellen Harasimowicz. HMH, 2010.
- Chrustowski, Rick. *Bee Dance*. Henry Holt, 2015.

- Hall, Kirsten. *The Honeybee*. Illustrated by Isabelle Arsenault. Atheneum, 2018.
- Holmes, Kirsty. *Life Cycle of a Honeybee*. Kidhaven, 2018.
- Stewart, Melissa. *Zoom in on Bees*. Enslow Elementary, 2014.

All the Way to the Top: How One Girl's Fight for Americans with Disabilities Changed Everything

Annette Bay Pimentel (author), Nabi H. Ali (illustrator)

Sourcebooks Explore, 2020.



This is the true story of Jennifer Keelan-Chaffins, who became an activist at age 6 when she participated in her first protest. Jennifer was born in 1981 and diagnosed with cerebral palsy in 1983, a time when access to public spaces was limited for people in wheelchairs. From the start of kindergarten, Jennifer was given limited access to school because of her use of a wheelchair. With her family, she joined a group who protested to get wheelchair lifts on buses and became one of the few children involved in the disabilities rights movement. Jennifer joined protesters from around the country in Washington, DC as they rallied in support of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The story culminates with the dramatic Capitol Crawl- activists left their wheelchairs and crawled up the steps of the capitol to make their voices heard. This is a thrilling, empowering story for young people who want to make a change in their world. As Jennifer says in the book's foreword, "...you don't have to be a grown up to make a difference."

Big Ideas and Enduring Understanding:

- One person can make a difference, regardless of their age or ability.
- People with physical disabilities have not always had equal access to public spaces.
- People working together to protest and educate can create change.

Overarching Questions:

- What does it mean to be an activist? What inspired Jennifer to become one?
- What made Jennifer different from the other activists in the story?
- How did Jennifer's world change after the ADA was passed?

Sample Text-Dependent Questions:

- What kinds of challenges did Jennifer face when she first started school?
- Why did the protesters choose to climb the steps to the U.S. Capitol?
- Why didn't the grown-ups want Jennifer to climb the steps?
- How did Jennifer change the actions of Congress- the people making the laws?

Curriculum Connections:

English/Language Arts:

- Have students find an issue in our society that they would like to see addressed. Have them write a "letter to the editor" to the local newspaper or send a letter to their representative (select board member, state representative, Congressperson, or even the president!) to let them know what change they'd like them to make regarding this issue.

- Protesters use catchy slogans and chants to make their point of view known. A good slogan is short and memorable: have students write one for the issue they identified above.

Social Studies:

- Have students walk around the school building or their homes. Do they see areas that would not be accessible to somebody with a disability? They can draw a map of that part of the building and mark the map to show where the improvements could be made.
- Many Americans use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate. Learn a few phrases or words in ASL to include everyone in a conversation.

Art & Music:

- Art has been used to raise awareness of issues for many years- on signs, t-shirts, posters, murals, etc. Have students create a design that could be used in a protest.
- Universal Design is a design principle that considers accessibility at the beginning of a project - i.e. incorporating ramps and other aids at the beginning of a construction project, or adding alt text and code to a website to make it readable by screen readers while building the website- rather than having to make it accessible later. Can you find some examples of buildings, products, or environments designed this way? Find more about the principles of Universal Design: <http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/The-7-Principles/7-Principals-.pdf>
- Protesters have used music as a way of capturing the attention of the public. Learn more about protest music and have students write their own protest song to a familiar tune. The First Amendment Museum has an amazing collection of protest music online. Note: this collection does contain explicit and adult content, so preview before you share selections with students. <https://firstamendmentmuseum.org/exhibits/history-of-protest-music/>

STEM:

- Technology has been used to make the world more accessible for people with different abilities. Learn about some adaptive technologies such as speech-to-text software, modified eating utensils, and hearing aids. Are these technologies just for people who have a disability?

Author/Illustrator Information:

- Find out more about Annette Bay Pimental on her website: <http://www.annettebaypimentel.com/>
- Find out more about Nabi H. Ali on his agent's website. You can also see samples of his art and other book illustration work: <https://thebrightagency.com/uk/publishing/artists/nabi-h-ali>
- Find out more about Jennifer Keelan-Chaffins on her website. Of special interest might be her blog postings: <https://jklegacy.com/blog>
- Check out this interview transcript of Annette Bay Pimental and Jennifer Keelan-Chaffins: <https://www.nancychurnin.com/thekidsareallwrite/dr2nhpe7wft7dd38bkc3exb4a33jh2>

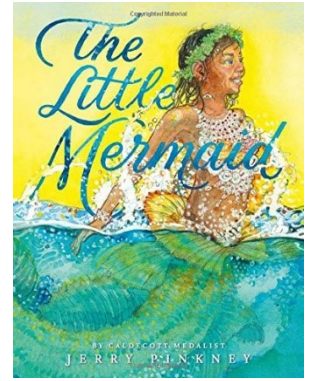
Companion Books:

- Burcaw, Shane. *Not So Different: What You Really Want to Ask About Having a Disability*. Illustrated by Matt Carr. Roaring Brook, 2017.
- Flood, Nancy Bo. *I Will Dance*. Illustrated by Julianna Swaney. Atheneum, 2020.
- Gianferrari, Maria. *Hello Goodbye Dog*. Illustrated by Patrice Barton. Roaring Brook, 2017.
- Nagara, Innosanto. *A is for Activist*. Triangle Square, 2016.

The Little Mermaid

Jerry Pinkney

Little, Brown, 2020.



Beloved author and illustrator Jerry Pinkney has reimagined Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale for a young, modern audience. His retelling focuses on exploration, family loyalty, sacrifice, and the importance of speaking up. Pinkney wisely substitutes the theme of thwarted romantic love from Andersen's original fairytale and the Disney film with a genuine and empowering friendship. His lush, detailed pencil and watercolor illustrations will invite children to draw comparisons to the Disney film, such as the lair of the sea witch and squawking seagulls, while also creating original elements to his underwater world. Pinkney has beautifully updated this famous fairytale in a story that embraces diversity with a main character of color and celebrates the power of using your voice.

Big Ideas and Enduring Understanding:

- Embrace the power of using your voice, and never give it up.
- Curiosity and exploration will take you to amazing new places.
- True friendship gives you strength and understanding and can endure separation.

Overarching Questions:

- Why is it important to always use your voice?
- What does true friendship mean?
- What does it mean to be part of a family?

Sample Text-Dependent Questions:

- Why does Melody's father ask the old sea turtle to keep track of Melody?
- How does Zion know what happened to Melody's voice?
- There are several animals that are depicted as flying throughout this book - flying fish, sea gulls, the butterfly. Why do you think Pinkney included them, and how does Melody connect to these creatures?

Curriculum Connections:

English/Language Arts:

- Do an author study of Pinkney's versions of other Andersen fairy tales, like *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Nightingale*.
- Just like Melody, have students invent a story about one of the objects in her collection of shipwrecked items.
- For older students, read the original Andersen version of the fairy tale and compare it to Pinkney's version. Create a Venn diagram using the comparisons.
- Have students create a story using one of Melody's sand drawings in the book.

STEM:

- Before reading the book, tell students to keep track of all the ocean and shore life they see. After reading the book, make a list of what they saw (flying fish, sea gulls, jellyfish, sea turtles, etc.). Have them research their favorite animal from the list.
- This book has several creatures that can travel through different habitats, such as sea gulls and butterflies. Have students make a list of the different habitats shown in the book, then have them make a separate list of all the animals shown throughout the book. For each habitat, have them list the documented animals that could exist in that habitat. Which ones are listed in more than one habitat? Why do you think these animals are included in the story?

Social Studies:

- Explore underwater archaeology. What types of wrecks do these archaeologists explore, and what do they find? How is Melody like an underwater archaeologist?
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/underwater-archaeology>
- Study other versions of merpeople throughout the world and across time using a source like Patricia Saxton's *The Book of Mermaids, Mermaids and Mermen* by Shannon Knudsen, or *The Mermaid Atlas* by Anna Claybourne. Student can also research merpeople and the folklore behind them on <https://kids.kiddle.co/Mermaid> or <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/mermaid/399544>.

Art:

- Use watercolor paints to create a beach or ocean scene in the style that Jerry Pinkney uses in this book.
- How could you communicate without your voice? Play charades or pictionary.

Author/Illustrator Information:

- Author/Illustrator website: <https://www.jerrypinkneystudio.com>
- [Jerry Pinkney: Imaginings Exhibition](#) in the Norman Rockwell Museum.

Companion Books:

- DiPucchio, Kelly. *Oona*. Illustrated by Raissa Figueroa. Katherine Tegen, 2021.
- Love, Jessica. *Julián is a Mermaid*. Candlewick, 2018.
- San Souci, Robert. *Sukey and the Mermaid*. Illustrated by Brian Pinkney. Aladdin, 1996.

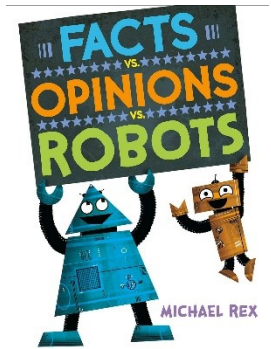
Facts vs. Opinions vs. Robots

Michael Rex

Nancy Paulsen, 2020.

Understanding the difference between facts and opinions is essential knowledge, especially now in our world of fake news and viral memes. And it's a fact that nothing could be more fun than a group of silly robots introducing the idea.

Wait---or is it an opinion?



Big Ideas and Enduring Understanding:

- Facts are anything that can be proven true or false, and opinions are something you feel and believe but cannot prove.
- It is important to understand facts, and to respect the right of people to have their own opinions.

Overarching Questions:

- Why is it important to know the difference between facts and opinions?
- What role does evidence play in the difference between facts and opinions?

Sample Text-Dependent Questions:

- What do we do when we don't have enough information to know whether something is true or false?
- When the green and yellow robots discuss their opinions, why do they have trouble getting along?
- What does it mean to be a "good friend" when the blue and orange robots are watching a movie?

Curriculum Connections:

English/Language Arts:

- Create a *Facts vs. Opinions vs. Robots* display by having students make a sketch of a large robot. Then each student should write one fact or opinion about the robot. Put the facts on one side under a large label, and the opinions on the other side, also labeled.
- Use the illustrations from the pages where the robots are having a conversation about their opinions, and have students write new dialog.
- After reading this book, share *Duck! Rabbit!* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal with your students. Use the different observations in the book to discuss whether the two narrators are sharing facts or opinions (use the definitions from this book: they are opinions, because they can't be proven true or false), and discuss what they could have done differently to prove whether the creature was a duck or a rabbit.

Digital Citizenship/Technology:

- If you have access to a Makerspace or making supplies, use the connection to take on making or programming robots! Create a simple robot such as a vibrating Bristlebot or a Scribblebot (<https://www.makerspaces.com/how-to-make-an-art-bot/>) or get out programmable robots such as a BeeBot and challenge students to create a program.
- With older students, create teams (the free version supports up to 5 teams) and play Factile, a Jeopardy-style fact and opinion review game: <https://www.playfactile.com/factandopinion17>

Art:

- Use small pieces of construction paper to create robots using collage. Add details with black markers to echo Michael Rex's illustration style.
- Practice art observation and facts vs. opinion skills by looking at a famous piece of artwork, such as *Girl With a Pearl Earring*, *The Starry Night* or the *Mona Lisa*. Have students share their observations, and also have them articulate whether each observation is a fact or an opinion. Model sharing factual observations such as, "Her hair is covered," and opinions like, "It is beautiful."

Outdoor Education/Physical Education:

- Robots rely on programs to function, and programming can be challenging because you must specify every little step! Create pairs and have students take turns being the programmer and the robot. The programmer needs to have the robot accomplish a simple task, such as opening a door or retrieving a book. The robot's job is to do only exactly what the programmer says and nothing more. It can be helpful to model this first, with a student as the programmer and yourself as the robot.
- Play "Red Light, Green Light," except that when you say a fact it is a green light, and an opinion is a red light.

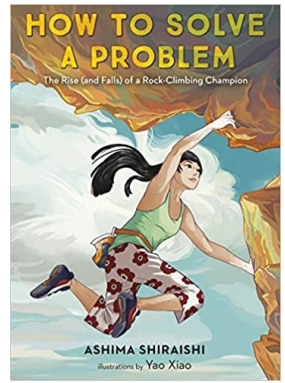
Author/Illustrator Information:

- Michael Rex's website: <http://mikerexbooks.blogspot.com/>
- An interview with Michael Rex about Facts vs. Opinions vs. Robots: <https://forum.teachingbooks.net/2020/07/michael-rex-on-facts-vs-opinions-vs-robots/>

Companion Books:

- Flynn, Riley. *Using Facts and Investigating*. Raintree, 2016. (UK ed.)
- Kang, Anna. *You Are Not Small*. Illustrated by Christopher Weyant. Two Lions, 2014.
- Winter, Jonah. *The Sad Little Fact*. Illustrated by Pete Oswald. Schwartz & Wade, 2019.

How to Solve a Problem: The Rise (and Falls) of a Rock-Climbing Champion
Ashima Shiraishi (author), Yao Xiao (illustrator)
Make Me a World, 2020.



Rock climbers, like Ashima Shiraishi, call boulders “problems” and if anyone knows how to solve one, it is Ashima. This story follows Shiraishi as she solves a particularly challenging problem and applies the lessons of rock climbing more broadly to other problems we may encounter in our lives. Xiao’s illustrations use bold outlines and saturated colors to depict Shiraishi’s ascent. A timeline of Shiraishi’s life and career is included as backmatter.

Big Ideas and Enduring Understanding:

- Problems can be solved by breaking them into manageable pieces.
- It’s important to keep trying and learn from your mistakes. Shirashi says she hopes the takeaway for her readers is that “you’ve got to stand up after each time that you fall down.”
- People can accomplish great things, no matter their age or other life circumstances.

Overarching Questions:

- How can you solve what seem to be overwhelming problems?
- What can we learn from failures or mistakes?

Sample Text-Dependent Questions:

- Ashima sees falls as opportunities. Why is that?
- Using the timeline on the last page of the book, identify what country the featured problem is located in. (South Africa)
- In “Ashima’s Ascent” (timeline) she is the first or youngest person to do many things. Identify two of them.
- *Illustration:* Why do you think Yao Xiao, the illustrator, used so many gear shapes in the second half of the book?
- *Illustration:* Both the author and illustrator are Asian American. Why might it be helpful to choose an illustrator of a similar background to tell a story?

Curriculum Connections:

Physical Education:

- If you have access to a climbing wall, have students make their own route or problem for others to solve. Mark and number the holds so that someone else can follow the path in the same way. Alternatively, make an obstacle course (on the playground, in the classroom, in the library or other setting) for others to solve.
- Ask students: what are some activities or sports that you would like to try? Do you know anyone that does them already? Have students interview someone about how they got started and if they faced any challenges.

Social-Emotional Learning:

- Have students identify a personal goal and how they will meet the goal. Have them write out the specific steps that they will take to solve it, and then challenge them to follow their timeline and meet their goal!
- Check out these growth mindset activities to accompany the book from Random House: https://images.randomhouse.com/promo_image/9781524773274_6912.pdf
- Share this two minute YouTube video from Great Big Story on Ashima Shiraishi: [She Was the Best Female Rock Climber In the World By Age 14](#)

Have a conversation based on some of the different things Ashima says in the video:

- *"It's a dangerous sport, but the only thing I'm afraid of is not being able to get to the top."* Sometimes we need to take risks to meet our goals.
- *"With climbing, it doesn't really matter how big you are."* Sometimes things we think are disadvantages can help us. Can you think of any other examples of this?
- *"When you're close to the top...you feel like you have to let go, but with climbing, you just can't let go."* When is another time you have to push yourself to your limit to meet a goal?

Social Studies:

- As a class or individually, use a database like *Gale Elementary in Context*, *PebbleGo*, or *Britannica School* to do some additional research about rock climbing or other Olympic sports/athletes, such as gymnastics, swimming, track and field, etc. (or time this with the 2022 Winter Olympics and research winter sports). Share what you learn with the class, create posters to share with your school community, or make digital posters/slides to share your learning with the world. Make sure to cite your sources!
- Hunt throughout the book for places and locations. Map locations connected to the author and illustrator. Do some research beyond the book, if possible. Some information you could search for: birthplace, home, climbing competitions, special problems, etc.

STEM:

- Create your own climbers by following the instructions in this tutorial: <https://www.makeandtakes.com/create-a-few-fun-climbing-critters>
- Ashima's mother designs and sews all her climbing pants, making just the right piece of clothing for what Ashima needs, with the bonus of getting to choose fun fabrics. Have students design their own climbing pants, or other piece of clothing that meets a specific need. What would it look like, and what function would it perform?

Author/Illustrator Information:

- Ashima lives in Brooklyn, NY but has recently also been living in Tokyo, Japan in preparation for the Summer Olympics and visiting family. Unfortunately, she didn't make the team to compete in the first ever Summer Olympics to feature climbing. Instagram: @ashimashiraishi

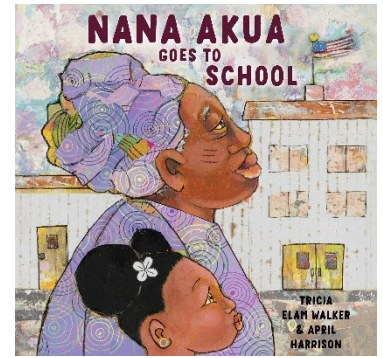
- Climbing related sponsors' information about her: <https://www.clifbar.com/athletes/ashima-shiraishi> <https://www.thenorthface.com/about-us/athletes/ashima-shiraishi.html>
- 3 1/2 minute audio clip of Ashima reading almost the entire book aloud: <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/564542/how-to-solve-a-problem-by-ashima-shiraishi-illustrated-by-yao-xiao/>
- Yao Xiao was born in China, but is now based in NYC. <http://www.yao.nyc/>

Companion Books:

- Clinton, Chelsea. *She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World*. Illustrated by Alexandra Boiger. Philomel, 2017.
- Rebel Girls. *Rebel Girls Lead – 25 Tales of Powerful Women*. Rebel Girls, 2021.
- Richards, Beah E. *Keep Climbing, Girls*. Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie. Simon & Schuster, 2006.
- Yamada, Kobi. *What Do You Do With a Problem?* Illustrated by Mae Besom. Compendium, 2016.

Nana Akua Goes to School

Tricia Elam Walker (author), April Harrison (illustrator)
Schwartz & Wade, 2020.



On Grandparents Day at school, Zura feels worried her classmates might be rude to her Nana Akua since she looks different. By weaving together rich threads of Ghanaian heritage like Adinkra symbols, family, and love, this story will leave readers feeling like they've been wrapped in a warm blanket.

Big Ideas and Enduring Understanding:

- Identity is much more than how we look on the outside.
- Stories and traditions we share with loved ones shape us.
- It takes courage to share what makes you unique.
- Everyone's face and body are unique, and it is important to accept and seek to understand people instead of reacting with fear or judgement.

Overarching Questions:

- Why are traditions important?
- What is the value of learning from someone about their culture?
- Why is it important to respect people who look different than we do?

Sample Text-Dependent Questions:

- How does Zura react when she hears it's going to be Grandparents Day?
- What makes Zura's favorite quilt special to this story?
- How does Nana Akua reassure and comfort Zura and her classmates? (ex: squeezes Zura's shoulder, smiles, big hugs)
- What is your favorite Adinkra symbol and its meaning from the end pages? Practice pronouncing the name of the symbol.

Curriculum Connections:

Social Studies:

- As a whole class, do some research about the geography and customs of Ghana, including Adinkra symbols. Use a source like *Britannica School* or *Gale in Context: Elementary* to ensure the information is accessible for students. This could also be a good opportunity for students to learn more about the geography of Africa as a whole.
 - These guides to Adinkra symbols and meanings could also be helpful for these activities: <http://adinkra.org/> and <https://www.adinkrasymbols.org/>
- Have students discuss: what is common in your own family's culture but might not be in someone else's?

Music:

- Learn a bit about djembe drums in this video from the Kennedy Center:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5U8md4rZS8>
Then use drums, or five-gallon buckets, to learn some djembe drum beats. This is a good opportunity to collaborate with a music teacher.

Art:

- Zura's quilt is an important part of this story. Discuss quilts as a tradition in many cultures, asking students if they have experience with quilts. Practice some basic sewing skills with students and have them either embroider symbols that represent them on cloth or sew a basic quilt block/doll quilt by sewing four squares of fabric together.

Social-Emotional Learning:

- It's okay to feel curious about other people, but we need to make sure we are respectful if we ask questions about how people look, talk, or act. Discuss the part of the book where Zura remembers her experiences of people reacting to Nana Akua's facial markings with fear or judgement. Think and talk about why the little boy said, "that lady looks scary" (p.10). How did this comment make Zura feel? What is another way he could have expressed his recognition that Nana Akua looks different from other people he has seen? How could his mother have reacted that might have helped? Use this guide to support you in the discussion:
<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/teaching-diversity-place-begin-0/>
- Organize a virtual grandparent visit day. Share this story with families, and then invite students' grandparents to visit the class either through a Meet or Zoom, or by recording a short video that you can share with students.

Author/Illustrator Information:

- Tricia Elam Walker's website: <https://www.triciaelamwalker.com/>
- April Harrison's website: <https://www.april-harrison.com/>

Companion Books:

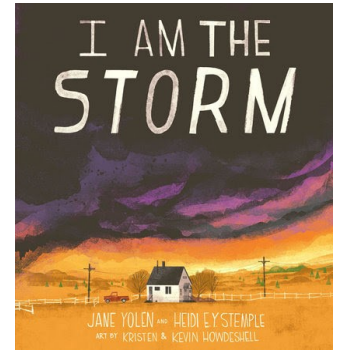
- Brantley-Newton, Vanessa. *Grandma's Purse*. Knopf, 2018.
- Castañeda, Omar S. *Abuela's Weave*. Illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez. Lee & Low, 1995.
- Diakité, Penda. *I Lost My Tooth in Africa*. Illustrated by Baba Wagué Diakité. Scholastic, 2006.
- Dorros, Arthur. *Abuela*. Illustrated by Elisa Kleven. Dutton, 1991.
- Robertson, David. *On the Trapline*. Illustrated by Julie Flett. Tundra, 2021.

I Am the Storm

Jane Yolen & Heidi E. Y. Stemple (authors)

Kristen & Kevin Howdeshell (illustrators)

Rise x Penguin Workshop, 2020.



As the title would suggest, it's true this story is about storms - the wildfires, blizzards, hurricanes, and tornadoes that are a part of living on Earth. However, the true stars of this book are the families that weather these storms, struggling to find closeness and safety while they recover from the damage, physical and mental. Lyrically written by a mother-daughter duo and richly illustrated by a husband-and-wife team, this novel celebrates family from beginning to end, showing how strong we are when we work together. The comforting repetitive phrases remind readers that all storms will end, we will recover, and by finding strength within, we will be okay. The backmatter gives just enough information to pique children's interest, but not so much as to scare them, though "it's okay to be scared."

Big Ideas and Enduring Understanding:

- Weather can be mighty and powerful, and so can you.
- It is ok to feel scared.
- There is value in being prepared.

Overarching Questions:

- What - or who - can help make you feel secure during a scary event?
- How can emotions be like the weather?

Sample Text-Dependent Questions:

- *Illustration:* What colors did you notice standing out in the illustrations during and after each type of storm?
- Where do the families go to stay safe during extreme weather conditions?
- How did the families help their neighbors after the storms?

Curriculum Connections:

STEM:

- Use this YouTube playlist (https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQlnTldJs0ZQ67D3cB0HVIaf3H_y8u54T) about extreme weather events from National Geographic Kids to learn a bit more about hurricanes, tornados, thunderstorms and blizzards. Try the "Tornado in a Bottle" activity shown in the tornado video section.
- Make a homemade barometer: <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Simple-Weather-Barometer> and use it to track the air pressure and associated weather over time.

- Extreme weather events like we see in this book are becoming more common as the climate changes due to human carbon emissions. With older students, use this lesson that demonstrates the greater probability of extreme weather events using dice:
https://ncse.ngo/sites/default/files/TMEO%20Lesson%204_%20Local%20Climate%20Impacts.pdf
- Explore the book, *Green City* by Allan Drummond. In this story, a town builds back more sustainably after their community is devastated by a tornado. Think about ways technology could help the people in *I Am the Storm* build back stronger. What specific technologies or inventions could they use? Students can think of real inventions or ones from their own imaginations.

Social-Emotional Learning:

- The families in the book connected with each other to comfort and calm themselves. Ask students: what family traditions do you have that are comforting when you're scared? They could be things like playing a game, cooking, picking flowers, or something completely different.

English/Language Arts:

- For each storm, the story has the same form and repeats the lines: "as tornadoes always do," "as blizzards always do," "as wildfires always do," and "as hurricanes always do." What do all these storms have in common? Try to use the same format to write about a different kind of extreme weather, such as a dust storm, a flood, or an ice storm.
- Have students write their own disaster themed similes: I am ____ as a wildfire, I am ____ as a tornado, etc.
- What might the cousins be saying to each other in the bunk bed scene? How about the family as they roast marshmallows during heavy snow? Have students write a short play about each scene and include dialogue.

Art:

- Ask students: are there types of extreme weather you can think of and/or have experienced yourself? Have them draw or paint a picture of their experience.
- Use watercolors or washable markers and do a rain painting (you'll need real rain or possibly a squirt bottle). Find detailed instructions here: <https://picklebums.com/three-ways-to-paint-with-rain/>

Author/Illustrator Information:

- Jane Yolen's website <https://www.janeyolen.com/>
- Heidi E.Y. Stemple's website <https://www.heidieystemple.com/>
- Kristen and Kevin Howdeshell's website <https://www.thebraveunion.com/>

Companion Books:

- Ashman, Linda. *When the Storm Comes*. Illustrated by Taeun Yoo. Nancy Paulsen, 2020.
- Rocco, John. *Blizzard*. Little, Brown, 2014.
- Rocco, John. *Hurricane*. Little, Brown, 2021.
- Wolff, Ashley. *Wildfire!* Beach Lane, 2021.*

*This title will be released on November 2, 2021.

General Picture Book Resources



Exploring Picture Books

A picture book is text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historical document; and foremost, an experience for a child.

As an art form, it hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of turning the page. On its own terms its possibilities are limitless.

—Barbara Bader,
from *American Picturebooks from Noah's Ark to the Beast Within*, 1976

The picture book is a highly developed, often sophisticated, widely available art form for children and families. Since its appearance in the 18th century, it has evolved from a medium of saccharine entertainment and moralistic instruction to a complex interactive art with its own requirements and structure.

The picture book is like a poem. The text must convey mood, emotion and setting with a few carefully considered words. Non-fiction picture books convey facts and information about a topic. The fiction version tells a story and invites the reader to enter the world it creates.

The illustrator is an interpreter, creating a sequence of pictures that build on one another to illuminate and expand the text. It is this sequential imagery working in concert with the written word that involves the child's imagination and brings the story and information to life.

What makes a picture book “work”?

In a successful picture book, text and illustration work together to make an interactive whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

A picture book begins with an idea. Sometimes this idea is in words and sometimes it's in pictures. What do authors and illustrators do to turn an idea into a book? Do Red Clover readers think the process is easier if the same person writes and illustrates a book? Why or why not? Which books on the list are written and illustrated by one person? Which ones are created by two or more people?

Authors usually do not have a chance to tell illustrators how they would like to have their books illustrated. Why do you think this happens this way? If you were the author, would you like to tell the illustrator what you wanted? If you were the illustrator, would you want the author telling you how to do the illustrations? Why or why not?

Who works behind the scenes?

- An **agent** helps the author find an editor and publisher and sometimes offers guidance on the story.
- An **editor** helps the author by suggesting ways to shape and pace the story and improve the text.

- A **book designer** (or an art director) decides how the book will look by choosing its size and shape (format), the color and type of paper and the type styles or fonts for the text. The designer also designs the cover and the layout of the pages.
- A **publisher** decides which books should be published by the publishing company.

Further resources:

- Bang, Molly Garrett. *Picture This: How Pictures Work*. SeaStar Books, 2000.
- Christelow, Eileen. *What Do Authors Do?* Houghton Mifflin, 1997.
- Christelow, Eileen. *What Do Illustrators Do?* Houghton Mifflin, 2013.
- Lambert, Megan Dowd. *Reading Picture Books with Children: How to Shake Up Storytime and Get Kids Talking About What They See*. Charlesbridge, 2015.
- Lester, Helen. *Author: A True Story*. Houghton Mifflin, 1997.
- Marcus, Leonard. *Side by Side: Five Favorite Picture-Book Teams Go to Work*. Walker, 2006.
- Shulevitz, Uri. *Writing with Pictures: How to Write and Illustrate Children's Books*. Watson, 1997.
- Stevens, Janet. *From Pictures to Words: A Book About Making a Book*. Holiday House, 1995.

Text

Suggestions for discussion about any picture book:

- Why do you think most picture books have a text? How can you tell a story by just using pictures without any text? What can text add to a picture book?
- What is the *genre* of this book? Mystery? Adventure? Contemporary Fiction? Folktale? Myth? Poetry? Comedy? Biography? Is it fiction or non-fiction? How do you know? What can you find in the text and/or pictures to support your conclusion?
- What is the *setting* of this book? Where does the story take place? Is there more than one setting? What words can you use to describe the place/places? When does the story happen? Past? Present? Future? Does the story happen in a short period of time? A week? A year? What support can you find for your conclusion?
- Who is the *narrator* of this story? Why do you think the author decided that this person should tell the story? Is the narrator also a character in the book? If the author chose a different person to be the narrator, how would the point-of-view of the story change?
- Who are the *characters* in this story? Who is the main character? How can you tell? Does the story have any secondary characters? How do these characters support the story? How might the story change if one of the secondary characters were taken out of the story? What do the characters in this story look like (physical description)? How do the characters in this story act (personality description)?
- What is the *plot* of this story? What's the problem (tension) in the story? How is it solved? Does the solution to the problem arrive at the beginning, middle or end of the story?
- What do you notice about the *type or typeface* of the story? Is the *font* the same throughout or does it change? If it changes, why do you think is this important? Where is the text placed in the story? Is there a pattern? Are there words in the story that are unfamiliar to you? What strategies can you use to help you figure out what these words mean?
- Is there a *message* in this story? What does the text make you think about? What questions does it raise for you? What connections can you make between this story and other stories you have heard? Does this story remind you of things you've experienced? Can you make any connections between this story and something that happened somewhere in the world?

Illustration

Illustrators use a variety of tools and techniques to interpret and amplify a picture book. They often start by making a series of rough sketches and then make decisions about what materials are best for the final illustrations.

What do you notice first about the illustrations in this year's books? Do the words and pictures always tell the same story?

Lines can be thick, thin, or varied; they can run around the edge of a shape or work with other lines to convey character, texture, energy, volume, or movement. Go on a line hunt. How many kinds of lines can you find?

What *colors* did the illustrator choose to include in the pictures? How are those choices connected to the content of the story? Are they bright? Exciting? Quiet? Mysterious? What language can your Red Clover readers use to describe the palette? In some cases, picture books are illustrated in black and white. Why do you think an illustrator choose to do this?

What are the basic shapes in the illustrations? How has the illustrator combined shapes in the picture? Take a shape walk, seeing which shapes you recognize.

What *media* (materials) were used to make the illustrations? Is the choice of medium connected in some way to the subject of the book?

Texture gives the viewer information about the way things look and feel. Sometimes the medium itself has a texture, such as handmade paper. Many illustrators use drawing and painting techniques like shading, cross-hatching, and variations in color to create texture. Others use a variety of materials as they make mixed media illustrations and collages. How do this year's Red Clover illustrators show texture?

In a process called *composition*, illustrators combine distinct elements into a unified whole. Choose one or more illustrations to explore. Is the mood peaceful or is there a sense of excitement or tension? How does the placement of characters and objects convey this? Do some elements seem closer than others because of their relative size or placement? Is the viewer's eye drawn to one object or area? Why? How does the direction characters are facing or an implied line created by objects lead the reader further into the book?

How would you describe the illustrator's *style* in each of this year's Red Clover books? Is it realistic? Impressionistic? Cartoon-like? Geometric? How is the illustrator's choice of style connected to the content of each book?

Book Design

A book designer is responsible for the unity, continuity and pacing of a picture book. Sometimes authors and illustrators are also book designers; sometimes book designers, art directors and illustrators work together. Often book designers make decisions about the book's appearance and overall effectiveness on their own.

There are many elements to consider: the shape and size of the book; the style, size, and color of the type; the weight, finish and color of the paper; the arrangement of text and illustrations; the use of details such as decorations and borders. Once readers become familiar with these components, asking what they notice may be the only prompt they need.

Here are some questions to help children begin to explore book design:

Does the shape and size of this book have a relationship with the contents? Explain. Look at the cover and title page—what can you predict about this story? Help readers identify the design elements that were used to set the stage.

Look at the book jacket, jacket flaps and endpapers. Can you find shared design elements? Do they appear in other parts of the book as well?

Look at the endpapers. If they are illustrated, how do they add detail or meaning to the story, if at all? If they are a solid color, why do you think that color was selected? Are they the same color and finish as the rest of the book? If not, why do you think they're different?

Talk about the typeface(s) the designer chose for the text. Can you find words to describe it? Does its style, size or color enhance the story in any way? How? What about the paper?

Look at the page layout—the arrangement of text, illustration, and white space, if any, on the page. Is there a pattern to the layout, or is it varied? Even in books with varied layouts, there is often one page that invites you to pause. What is different about the layout on that page? Can you find other examples in which the layout helps pace the story? What are some additional design elements that weave the story and illustrations together, such as borders, decorations, or spot art?

Designers may also decide to include internal organizers such as front matter and back matter, maps, or a glossary. What kinds of internal organizers can you find in the books on this year's list? How do they help you enjoy these books?

Appendix



Glossary of Terms

Acrylics

Plastic-like paints that stick to almost any surface, dry fast, and then aren't affected by water. Light colors can be painted over dried, dark colors.

Airbrush

A small spray gun that blows out colored ink in a smooth, continuous tone as a spray paint can does, but the area covered can be controlled.

Background

The part of an illustration that appears far away.

Back matter

The information between the last page of the book and the back endpapers, such as a glossary or endnote. Sometimes this information is in the front of the book, after the title page.

Bleed

When artwork extends to the edge of the page. In a full bleed illustration, the artwork extends to all four edges of the page.

Book block (or text block)

The total of the signatures constituting the body of a book.

Borders

Frames used to enclose text or illustrations which can be simple lines or elaborate and detailed artwork that provides additional information about the story.

Caricature

A cartoon drawing of a person that usually exaggerates some special feature that a character has, such as bushy eyebrows or big ears.

Collage

An artistic composition made by gluing different materials, such as paper, photographs, cloth, and so on onto a surface.

Cross-hatching

A drawing technique that uses lots of little lines crossing back and forth to color in an area.

Die

A device used for cutting out, forming or stamping material.

Double-page spread

Two pages facing one another in which the illustration extends across both pages.

Endpapers

Sheets at the front and back of the book that attach the pages of the book to its cover. They hide the binding and may be decorated or plain.

Flap copy

The information printed on the flaps of the book jacket.

Foreground

The part of an illustration that seems closest to the viewer.

Front matter

The information between the front endpapers and the first page of text, such as the title page, copyright page and dedication.

Gatefold

A foldout, especially one that opens to double the page size. A double gatefold is one in which two facing pages open outward.

Gouache

Watercolor with white added (except for black gouache). It dries lighter than it looks when wet and can dry in a very even, flat color.

Gutter

Portion of the paper taken up by the center binding of a book.

Medium

The kind of art material that is used in any picture. Plural: media.

Mixed Media

An artistic composition made by using more than one medium.

Page layout

The arrangement of text, illustration and white space, if any, on the page.

Palette

The colors used by a particular artist or for a particular painting.

Perspective

Refers to the point of view of a story's narrator as well as the vantage point of the viewer of an illustration; with regard to this second meaning, it is the art of picturing objects with reference to relative distance and depth.

Renaissance

The humanistic revival of classical art, architecture, literature, and learning that originated in Italy in the 14th century and later spread throughout Europe. It marked the transition from medieval to modern times.

Serif

A fine line projecting from a main stroke of a letter in common styles of type. Sans serif typefaces lack these fine lines.

Signature

Group of pages that are printed on the same press sheet, folded, cut, and sewn together to form a book. A standard picture book has two sixteen-page signatures.

Spot art

Small illustrations integrated into double-page illustrations or isolated and balanced against text. Also called vignettes.

Wash

A watercolor term for a flat layer of very diluted color lay across the paper. It can either be an even layer of color or a graded layer that gets lighter.

Adapt for local newspapers:

Red Clover Book Award Picture Books Coming to _____ School or Library

[NAME OF YOUR TOWN]—Children at the [name of your school or library] will soon be having a great time arguing about the merits of their favorite Red Clover Book Award nominees while making important connections to the Common Core State Standards.

As participants in the Red Clover Book Award Program, K-4 students will debate the pros and cons of the ten books selected by the Red Clover Book Award Committee, which is comprised of Vermont children's literature experts. Using the Red Clover Book Award Educator's Resource Guide and ideas developed by local teachers and librarians, the students will compare stories and artistic styles, do research, learn new vocabulary, and possibly build or craft a thing or two!

And what a range of books there is this year! Readers will love *If You Come to Earth, Above the Rim*, *The Barnabus Project*, *Honeybee*, *All the Way to the Top*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Facts vs. Opinions vs. Robots*, *How to Solve a Problem*, *Nana Akua Goes to School*, and *I Am the Storm*. The books, all of which were published in 2020, were selected for the quality of their stories, design and artwork.

In the spring of 2022, each student will vote for their favorite book from the list. Every year for the past several years, thousands of young Vermonters from schools all over the state have participated in this program, which is under the auspices of the Vermont Department of Libraries.

To learn more about the Red Clover Book Award, call [school or library contact] at [school or library phone number], and visit the award home page at: <https://bit.ly/2u0RZ3p>

Adapt for your school newsletter:

Join the Fun with the Red Clover Book Award Program!

Beginning [date], students in grades _____ will be reading, discussing and voting for their favorite Red Clover picture book! The ten Red Clover nominees were selected by a group of children's literature experts from all around Vermont, and include books such as *If You Come to Earth*, *Nana Akua Goes to School*, *I Am the Storm*, *The Barnabus Project* and *The Little Mermaid*, along with five other exemplary picture books published in 2020. Students will make important connections to the Common Core State Standards as they learn about how books are made, the relationship between artwork and text, and other ways of studying literature using activities from the Red Clover Educator's Resource Guide as well as ideas developed by teachers and librarians here at school. You can get a list of the books and ideas for things to talk about from [contact person].

Last year, thousands of K-4 students from all over Vermont participated in this program. The Red Clover Book Award is under the auspices of the Vermont Department of Libraries, and can be found on their website here: <https://bit.ly/2u0RZ3p>